

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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IO-10 AF-06 /077 W

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FM AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 1365

AMEMBASSY LISBON NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO COMUSFORAZ

USCINCEUR

CONFIDENTIAL PONTA DELGADA 0478

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: AZOREAN DEVELOPMENTS

REF: PONTA DELGADA 477

1. PPD DEPUTY FROM PONTA DELGADA, AMERICO NATALINO DE VIVEIROS ON DECEMBER 23 ASKED THAT I CONVEY TO THE AMBASSADOR HIS REQUEST THAT THE AMBASSADOR USE HIS INFLUENCE WITH THE SOCIALISTS TO HELP RESOLVE THE CURRENT CRISIS IN THE AZORES.

2. VIVEIROS SAID THAT THE PRINCIPLE OF POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE AUTONOMY FOR THE AZORES AND MADEIRA HAS ALREADY BEEN APPROVED IN THE CONSTITUTION. HE EXPLAINED THAT THE COMMITTEE WHICH DRAFTED THE STATUTE ON AUTONOMY FOR THE AZORES ALSO DREW UP THE PROPOSAL SUBMITTED TO THE GOP BY THE JUNTA REGIONAL WHICH WOULD INCREASE THE JUNTA'S POWERS BY ALLOWING IT TO ISSUE DECREE LAWS AND REGULATIONS. THE MINISTER OF INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION HAD GONE EVEN FARTHER AND SUGGESTED THE JUNTA BE GIVEN MINISTERIAL POWERS. WHEN THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS ON DECEMBER 16 DISCUSSED THE ISSUE, THE SOCIALISTS OPPOSED INCREASING THE JUNTA'S POWERS AND PROPOSED

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THE THE MINISTERS DELEGATE AUTHORITY TO THE JUNTA AND THAT CERTAIN

SECTORS OF GOVERNMENT BE REMOVED FROM THE JUNTA'S AUTHORITY. THE JUNTA FEARS THAT AUTHORITY DELEGATED BY A MINISTER ONE DAY MAY BE RETRACTED THE NEXT AND OBJECTS TO THE LIMITATION OF ITS POWERS. IN RESPONSE TO THE JUNTA'S TELEGRAM (REFTEL) THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS IS RECONSIDERING THE QUESTION TODAY (DEC. 23).

3. VIVEIROS EXPLAINED THAT THE POPULATION IN THE AZORES IS TENSE AND IF THE CRISIS IS NOT RESOLVED THE PEOPLE WILL RAISE. THAT WOULD POSSIBLY LEAD TO A BLOODY CONFRONTATION WITH THE MILITARY WHICH HE WANTED TO AVOID AT ALL COSTS. FOR THIS REASON HE HOPES THAT THE AMBASSADOR WILL USE HIS INFLUENCE WITH THE SOCIALISTS TO PERSUADE THEM TO GRANT THE JUNTA THE AUTHORITY IT REQUESTED. I PROMISED TO CONVEY HIS MESSAGE AND NOTED THAT THIS WAS AN INTERNAL PORTUGUESE ISSUE.

4. VIVEIROS SAID THE PPD OF THE DISTRICTS OF PONTA DELGADA AND HORTA ON DECEMBER 23 HAD TELEGRAPHED A REQUEST THAT THE GOP GRANT THE JUNTA REGIONAL POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE AUTONOMY IMMEDIATELY. HE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE LOCAL PPD WOULD TAKE AN ACTIVE PART IN ANY CONFRONTATION THAT MIGHT DEVELOP.

5. COMMENT: IT IS CLEAR THAT THE AZOREANS ARE NOT GOING TO BACK DOWN, EVEN THOUGH THEY DO NOT RELISH THE CONSEQUENCES OF A CONFRONTATION.

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